

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2506

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INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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REF: MOSCOW 13962 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. AUTHORITIES ROUGHLY CLOSED DOWN AN OPEN-AIR EXHIBIT OF SOVIET "UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS" ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF MOSCOW SUNDAY AFTERNOON, SEPTEMBER 15, AND AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS WERE AMONG THOSE SLIGHTLY ROUGHED UP. END SUMMARY.

2. OSCAR RABIN, ONE OF PRIMARY ORGANIZERS OF EVENT, HAD SOUGHT MOSSOVIET PERMISSION TO STAGE EXHIBIT IN OPEN AREA NEAR BELYAYEVA METRO STATION. ACCORDING TO OTHER ARTISITS HE WAS LED TO BELIEVE PERMISSION MIGHT BE GRANTED, BUT ON SEPTEMBER 13, LAST WORKING DAY BEFORE SCHEDULED EVENT, HE WAS GIVEN NEITHER YES NOR NO ANSWER BY MOSSOVIET. ARTISTS PLANNED TO ATTEMPT TO OPEN EXHIBIT AT NOON ANYWAY, BUT IT WAS EFFICIENTLY BROKEN UP BY 1:15 BY MILITIA, CONTINGENT OF YOUNG KOMSOMOL, AND CITY STREET-CLEANING WATER-SPRAYING TRUCKS AND BULLDOZERS.

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3. SEVERAL ARTIST PARTICIPANTS, INCLUDING OSCAR RABIN, WERE ROUGHLY THRUST INTO WAITING MILITIA CARS, SOME WITH GRATUITOUS KARATE CHOPS.

4. AT LEAST SEVERAL CANVASES, SOME OF THEM QUITE LARGE, WERE WRESTED FROM ARTISTS AND THROWN INTO DUMP TRUCK FILLED WITH SAND. ONE OF TWO YOUNG MEN IN BACK OF TRUCK DROPPED THEM ONTO THE STAND AND STOOD ON THEM WITH A PROUD SMIRK. OTHER CANVASES WERE REPORTEDLY BROKEN UP BY RAIDERS, AND SOME PLOWED UNDER BY BULL-DOZERS.

5. WATER TRUCKS WERE USED TO CLEAR CROWD, WHICH ESTIMATED AT 400 AT PEAK, AND MILITIA THREATENED TO BULLDOZE PARKED CARS OF SPECTATORS -- INCLUDING THOSE OF AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS. CROWD WHICH GATHERED DESPITE LIGHT RAIN WAS LARGELY MADE UP OF ARTISTS AND SUPPORTERS, CORRESPONDENTS, DIPLOMATS AND A MIXTURE OF LOCAL RESIDENTS.

6. AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS COVERING AND PHOTOGRAPHING EVENT WERE ROUGHED UP. AP CORRESPONDENT LYNNE OLSON WAS PUSHED AND PUNCHED TO GROUND. AND NEW YORK TIMES CORRESPONDENT CHRIS WREN REPORTED TOOTH DAMAGED WHEN CAMERA WAS PUSHED INTO HIS FACE. EMBASSY CONSOFF WHO WAS PRESENT ENDEAVORED TO INTERVENE TO PROTECT AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS, AND DISSUADED SOME YOUNG MEN FROM SEIZING AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS' FILM. CONSOFF'S ACTION MAY ALSO HAVE REDUCED THE MANHANDLING OF THE CORRESPONDENTS, WHICH WAS GOING ON AT SAME TIME. THE YOUNG MEN CHALLENGED BY CONSOFF TO SHOW DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE OF THEIR POLICE AUTHORITY COULD ONLY IDENTIFY THEMSELVES AS KOMSOMOL MEMBERS, AND CONSOFF DOUBTS THEY WERE KGB PLAIN CLOTHESMEN AS CORRESPONDENTS BELIEVE. ONE OLDER MAN WHO SEEMED BE IN AUTHORITY REFUSED TO IDENTIFY HIMSELF, AND WOULD SAY ONLY THAT "WE ARE THE WORKING CLASS, THE INTERNATIONAL PROLETARIAT." CONSOFF AND CORRESPONDENTS COMPLAINED TO UNIFORMED MILITIA OF THEIR FAILURE TO PROTECT MISS OLSON.

7. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS AT LEAST ONE CORRESPONDENT IS FILING STORY THAT CONSOFF WAS ROUGHED UP. ALTHOUGH CONSOFF WAS SHOVED AROUND IN FRACAS, ASSAILANTS IMMEDIATELY TOOK THEIR HANDS OFF HIM WHEN CONSOFF IDENTIFIED HIMSELF, AND HE DOES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NOT CONSIDER THAT HE WAS ROUGHED UP.

8. EMBASSY PLANS TO PROTEST TO MFA FAILURE OF MILITIA TO PROTECT AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS FROM MANHANDLING, AND HAS SO

INFORMED MOSCOW PRESS CORPS.
DUBS

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